

INCREASING CHECK AVERAGES

PURPOSE: This operational guide is provided to assist Air Force club managers and staff in boosting food and beverage check totals.

SCOPE: This guide applies to Air Force club management and employees.

GENERAL: Most customers come to a restaurant prepared to order an entrée, the challenge is to convince them to purchase other items. One of the best ways to boost check totals is to promote add-on items such as appetizers, side dishes, desserts, and beverages.

GUIDANCE

1. Offer add-on items that have “come-back flavor”, they taste so good that customers return again and again.
2. Develop signature items for specialty beverages, appetizers and desserts.
3. Create new menu items periodically to keep customer interest.
4. Offer a dessert sampler. This makes it easier for the customer to decide what they want.
5. Train servers to describe the choices rather than simply asking a yes or no question.
 - a. Before the server even takes entrée orders, they should tell the customer about the desserts. Your wait-staff might tell customers that the cream cheese cake is outstanding tonight and ask if they could save them a piece. You’ve already planted the thought of dessert into the customer mind regardless of their response.
 - b. Don’t just tell customers about your food and beverage program, show them. When bringing desserts and specialty drinks to a customer, wait staff should display the items as they walk by other customers. Don’t take too long and keep the original customer waiting.
6. Add contests and incentives to reward servers. Change the contest or incentive program each month. For example, this month it may be a dessert contest, next month a wine incentive contest, and the following month could be for who sold the most house specialties.

SUMMARY: Servers who know how to sell will increase sales. All servers should be familiar with the taste of the food served. There’s nothing more frustrating than to ask a server if something is good, only to have them respond, “I don’t know.” It’s up to the club manager to ensure their staff is adequately trained and familiar with all food and beverage products. The bottom-line depends upon it!